

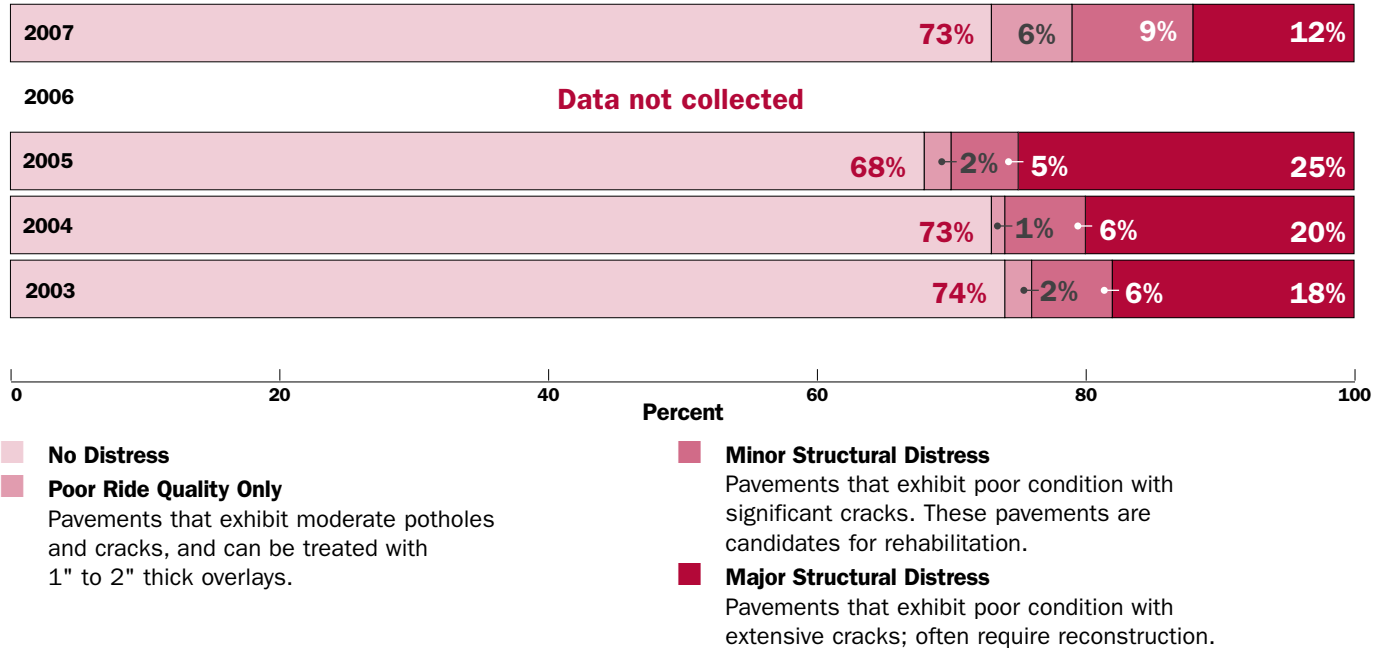
State Highway Pavement

Condition of Pavement on State Highways Improves; Share of Roads Showing Major Structural Distress Drops by Half

- After slipping in 2005, pavement conditions on state-owned highways in the Bay Area have improved markedly. The share of roads with no distress returned to 73 percent, after dipping to 68 percent in 2005. At 12 percent, the share of roads with major structural distress is half of what it was in 2005. (Data was not collected for 2006.)
- At 73 percent, the share of roads with no distress is approaching the levels recorded earlier this decade, when a sizable, one-time infusion of cash in fiscal year 2000-01 was used to repair damaged roads and perform preventive maintenance. In the intervening years, the state was not able to sustain investments in road repair, and the mileage of highways with distressed pavement crept up – culminating in a five-percentage point jump from 2004 to 2005.

Note:  
State-owned roadways are commonly called state highways and include freeways, rural highways (such as Route 1 along the Pacific Coast, Route 29 in Napa and Route 116 in Sonoma) and state-owned urban and suburban arterials (such as San Pablo Avenue in Alameda and Contra Costa counties and Skyline Boulevard in San Mateo County).

Pavement Conditions for State Highways in the Bay Area, 2003–2007



Source: Caltrans  
Includes state-owned freeways and non-freeway roadways. Excludes state-owned bridges.  
Total Bay Area lane miles in 2003 was 5,960. Total in 2004 and 2005 was 5,980. Total in 2007 was 5,950.

- The \$19.9 billion transportation bond (Proposition 1B) passed by voters in November 2006 has helped to reverse the trend by including \$500 million for state highway maintenance. Caltrans is using this money to accelerate repair work on some of the neediest and costliest state highway segments in California. The results are reflected in dramatic decrease in the share of roads with the most distressed pavement, which is at its lowest point since 1999. Unfortunately, this too is a one-time infusion of cash. Unless we find resources to sustain the higher level of investment, we should expect pavement condition levels to revert to their downward trends.